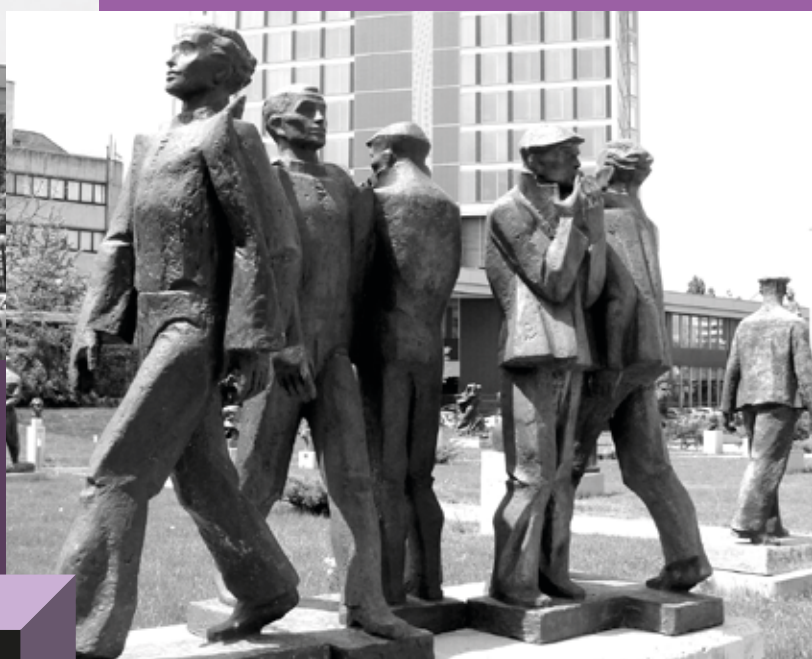




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# newsletter

2014–2015



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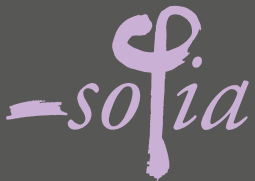
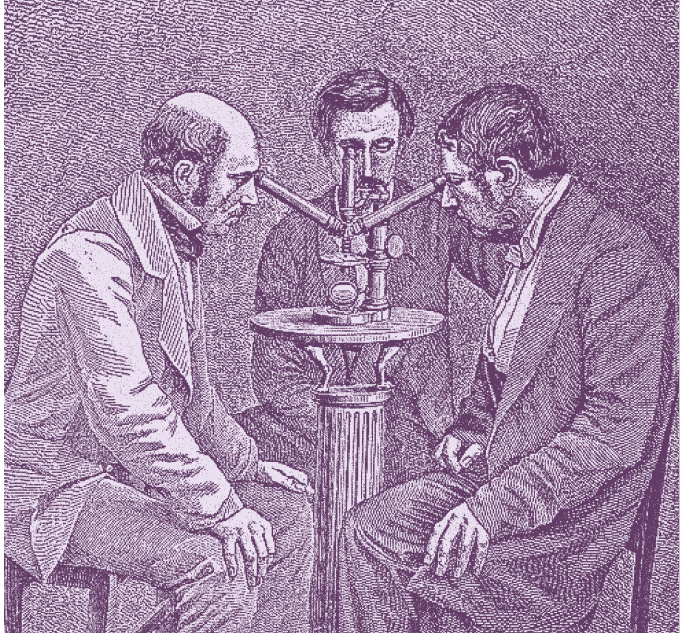
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**Mark Kramer:**  
**Revisiting the History  
of the Cold War**

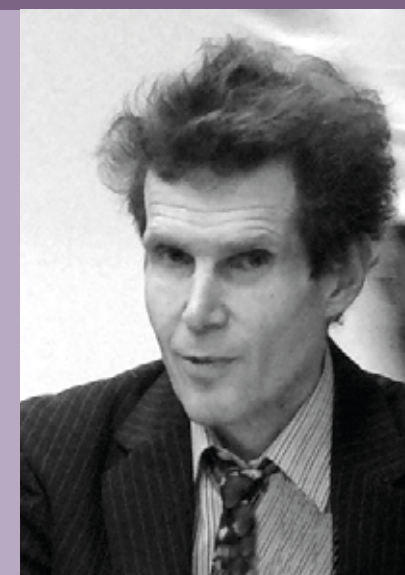
**Daniela Koleva:**  
**Communism Studies  
Beyond the Political**

**Bogdan C. Iacob:**  
**History of Communism  
Beyond the Nation**



## The State of the Art in Communism Studies

12th May 2014



Professor **Mark Kramer** is Director of Cold War Studies at Harvard University and a Senior Fellow at Harvard's Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies. Originally trained as a mathematician at Stanford and Harvard Universities, he then studied International Relations at Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar. In addition to teaching at Harvard, he has taught International Relations, Comparative Politics, and Statistics as a visiting professor at Yale and Brown Universities and Aarhus University in Denmark. He is the author of many books and academic articles on a wide range of topics. His two latest books, *Imposing, Maintaining, and Tearing Open the Iron Curtain: The Cold War and East-Central Europe, 1945-1990* (Rowman & Littlefield), and *Reassessing History from Two Continents* (University of Vienna Press) were published in late 2013.



**Daniela Koleva** is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski." Since 2011 Dr Koleva has been Vice-Chair of the Domain Committee ISCH, COST Programme (European Cooperation in the Field of Scientific and Technical Research). She has been a guest lecturer at the University of Nottingham, UK; American University in Bulgaria; University of Regensburg, Germany; University of Jena, Germany; Peter Pazmani Catholic University, Hungary; and University of Fribourg, Switzerland. Dr. Koleva has been granted fellowships at the Research Centre (ZRC) of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia (2010); ECASS, University of Essex, Colchester, UK (2009); GWZO, University of Leipzig, Germany (2008), and others.



**Bogdan C. Iacob** holds a doctoral degree in History from Central European University. His PhD research addressed *Stalinism, Historians, and the Nation. History-Production in Communism Romania 1955-1966*. He has been a research fellow at several academic institutions, most recently Imre Kertész Kolleg (Jena). He has published numerous articles on the political discourse of the communist regime in Romania, history writing in Eastern Europe, the relationship between intellectuals and politics in twentieth-century Romania, and approaches to the communist past. He is co-editor (with Prof. Vladimir Tismaneanu) of *The End and the Beginning. The Revolutions of 1989 and the Resurgence of History* (CEU Press, 2012) and *Remembrance, History, and Justice. Dealing With the Past in Democratic Societies* (CEU Press, 2014).

2014 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the end of the Cold War and the subsequent political changes in Eastern Europe. The Cold War is emblematically visualized by Winston Churchill's statement (1946), "An Iron Curtain has descended across the Continent", when Soviet and Western foreign objectives clashed in Eastern Europe. By 1948, the communist regimes had gained sway throughout the region. Eastern Europe was firmly placed within Moscow's sphere of influence, embarked on Stalinist transformations of the social, political and economic systems, and adopted increasingly repressive policies at home. The shift in Soviet policy toward Eastern Europe exerted a detrimental impact on East – West relations, and amounted to an unprecedented rivalry and confrontation in post-World War II

history marked by two competing ideologies and a transformed, European bipolar realm.

Prof. Kramer drew on declassified documents from the communist archives, formerly sealed to researchers, and provided a historical overview of the events, processes, and agents that built and defined the once polarized world order. He acknowledged that there is certain nostalgia for the past in the countries of the ex-Communist Bloc, conceptualized as wistfulness for a bygone period of "stability and peace". Yet, as the newly available archival materials prove, solidity and safety were illusory misconceptions about the period, as a nuclear arms race ever lurked in the background.

So, what did Eastern Europe live through in 1945-1989? Dr Daniela Koleva asked. What stories do we, East Europeans, tell about it? What meaning (or meanings) do we invest in these narratives?

The period has been variably defined as "communism" (a term applied mostly in political philosophy) or "socialism" (used in history and anthropology). The choice of term depends on discipline: the former is applied mostly in political philosophy, the latter in history and anthropology. But a preference for one term over the other is also linked to national cultures of memory: France, Romania, and Hungary refer to "communism," Bulgaria and the post-Yugoslav countries to "socialism." There

is a difference in approaches, too: "communism" is favoured by "totalitarianists," whereas "socialism" is chosen by "revisionists".

"Totalitarianism" provides an intellectual discourse paradigm in the former communist countries, but it has been resorted to less and less by western scholars. Yet, according to Dr Koleva, the implications of the concept do not entirely overlap. In East European studies, it mostly refers to the non-freedom and colonization of the private and public sectors by the political system, and thus slightly diverges from the original political-philosophical theorizing in the works of Hannah Arendt, Claude Lefort, and others. Consequently, the term is context-dependent. Its use may suggest value positions, too, and not merely theo-



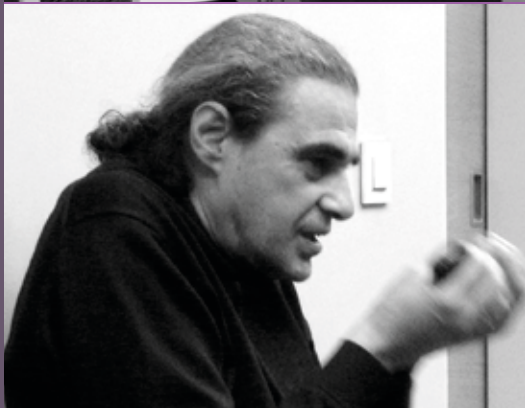
retical approaches. Scholarly rigour does not preclude an ethical stance, so long as it is explicit and reflected upon. Hence, even when it goes beyond the political in terms of choice of theme and subject matter, the study of communism is bound to stay within the political sphere in terms of morals and meanings.

Since the collapse of the Communist Bloc in 1989, Communism Studies gradually returned to the mainstream of historiographical debates, moving away from its imposed Cold-War “blinkers”. Subsequently, the field experienced a series

of “turns” – linguistic, cultural, spatial, archival, imperial, subjective, gender, etc. – reflective of the general developments within the art of history writing. Dr Bogdan Iacob pinpointed transnationalism as one of the latest approaches embraced in Communism Studies as its subject of exploration has increasingly fused with the global histories of the twentieth century. Adding a spatial aspect to the archival and subjective trajectories of examination will result in a more comprehensive picture of the historical experience of state socialism, and thus go beyond the confines of the nation state.

# Daniela Koleva (ed) Love under Socialism: Patterns, Images, Taboos

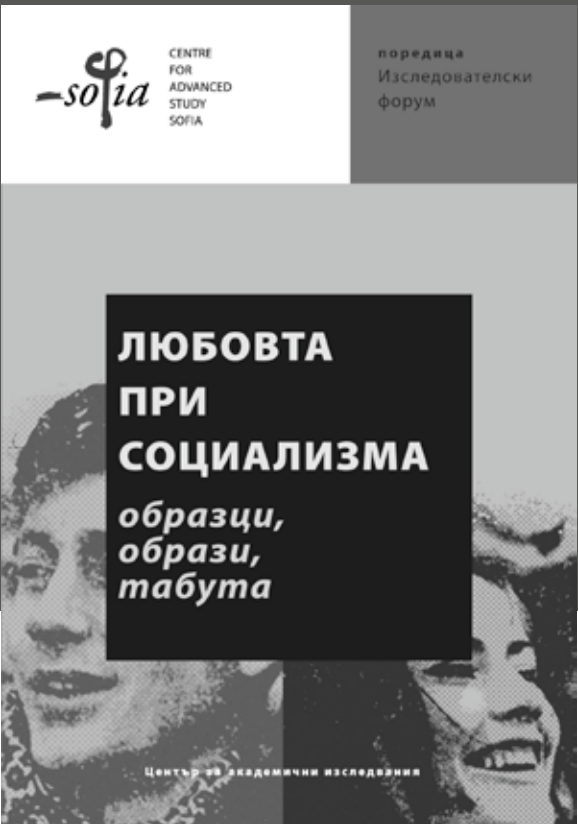
CAS/Riva Publishers, 2015



Could love under socialism bear distinctive, idiosyncratic characteristics that distinguish it from its manifestations in other epochs and in different historical circumstances? The answer depends on one’s presumptions about whether feelings – or at least their visible traces – are historical, time-defined constructs and, hence, socially and culturally shaped concepts as well. According to the theory of social constructivism, society tends to mould, encourage or restrain emotions by deploying particular ideologies, language, cultural practices, implications, expectations and moral norms to affect how they articulated and construed. Love is no exception.

The collection *Love under Socialism* investigates the efforts of the Bulgarian communist regime to directly apply a mechanism of psychological engineering on its citizens, and explores how such endeavours are subject to serious modification “from below”. However, changes in the official socialist paradigm occurred not only due to people’s passive resistance or (to use the French scholar Michel de Certeau’s term) “poaching” on the regime’s cultural norms and products, thus never yielding fully to the totalitarian dictate. Rechanneling of the formal discourse also became possible because of certain factors embedded in the system’s fabric itself.

The authors’ objective is to outline those specific strategies and circumstances that redirect the regime’s formulation and management of love away from its initial preconception and definition. As a result, the communist system of impact breaks down, disintegrating into numerous agents – all of whom have their own interests and priorities. By either interacting with or fighting against the formal discourse, these agents contribute to the construction of the complex mosaic of everyday life under real socialism, as well as to the ambiguous situation of feelings within its fabric.



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Images of Love in Popular Culture

- Galina Goncharova** Love for the Poet/Poetry in Letters and the Socialist Frameworks of the Young Literary Celebrity
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## Existential Socialism IV: Ageing under Socialism



The new *CAS Discussion Series, Ageing under Socialism*, is a continuation of the highly popular and successful seminar sequences on *Childhood* (2008), *Death* (2011–2012) Love (2013), and *The Body under Socialism* (2014) hosted by CAS.

For its part, *Ageing under Socialism* continues to explore the collective debates about existential policies under socialism, which, following the German sociologist Ulrich Beck's definition, cross the boundaries between the political system and everyday life. Traditionally, the life-cycle topics outlined above were either absent from official ideological models or, if touched upon, tended to sharply diverge from the everyday practices of the people. Adopting a post-revisionist approach, the sequence of CAS discussion seminars highlights informal, private and everyday issues and life situations under socialism, but without neglecting the forms of their political legitimization. Bringing together numerous ideological, institutional and biographical perspectives in an interdisciplinary dialogue, the seminars aim to throw light on how institutionally constructed scenarios were lived by individual actors and hence, how ideological models related to people's everyday experiences under socialism.

The *Discussion Series* explores the official grand narrative of socialism as yet another variety of modernization, as well as its less visible side – the administrative utopia in which full societal control might be attained by “translating” the master nar-

rative into the “languages” of law, social organization, and aesthetics, eschatology, executive and everyday practices. Within the framework of existential situations, subjectivity and experience mark the starting points for reassessing the socialist past. Concurrently, focusing on situations taken from the human lifecycle, the sequel of seminars constructs the individual as an active agent in a society that explicitly privileges the common above the private good. But the abundance of microscopic activities that enable individuals to privatize and navigate within/between spaces, help us assess their actions as peculiar (intra)policies.

*Ageing under Socialism* inquisitively contrasts ideologies, policies, everyday practices and representations. In particular, it focuses on

- Ageing and Old Age as conceived and reevaluated within medical, social, ideological, aesthetic, religious, and everyday discourses;
- Old Age as caught between marginalization and care;
- Ages and their social roles: childhood, youth, maturity and old age;
- Images of age and age stereotypes as seen in change and from the perspective of power relations;
- Patterns of ageing as related to conflicting scenarios (urban vs. rural, male vs. female, traditional vs. modern, religious vs. atheistic, power vs. marginal);
- Generational clashes in their socialist variety;
- The generational discourse of socialism: old people and the young regime;
- The ageing of the regime.



### BOOK LAUNCH

## Dessislava Lilova (ed) Natural Sciences, Technologies and Social Worlds

CAS/Riva Publishers, 2015

It is just another day that begins on the bathroom scales, with a portion of calories in the kitchen, minutes and kilometres spent on the public transport, and ending in front of the television, with the latest news about casualties in some hot spot on our planet. Following the same logic that links weather forecasting to accounting degrees and hectopascals, mankind's tomorrow can only be visualized if science – technology, genetic engineering, medicine – is taken into consideration. Science claims to establish rather than manufacture hard data, maintaining that the latter have been there all the time, just awaiting their discovery. These truths, alienated from objectivity and floating above the moving sands of historical time, assume a vital importance in times of the overall deficiency of fundamental cultural precepts. Therefore, is it really worth casting doubt on them?

Our only acquisition from returning science to the sands of history may be our changing vision of those very sands. After all, there is nothing abnormal in their mobile nature. Fear of history is not susceptible to medical treatment; in fact, it is triggered by replacing control of history with an orthodox belief in truth that can be subject to quantification with mathematical equations. If there is still room for optimism, it can be found in the commonplace truth that nonetheless, science is a product of human activity. Of course (fortunately), this does not imply that scientific discoveries are less objective. Yet, due to their origin, they have preserved something pertinent – traces of questions posed by history, the answers of which are sought in science. It is these “fingerprints” that present the research objective of the current volume.

The outcome of the CAS cross-disciplinary seminar *Natural Sciences and Social Worlds*, convened by a former CAS Fellow, Assoc. Prof. Dessislava Lilova, was published in the CAS Research Forum publication series (CAS/Riva Publishers) in January 2015. The collection of articles analyzes the boundaries and the interface between natural and social sciences, and re-examines the historical and the social context of technologies and exact sciences. The book is divided into three sections, which focus respectively on the sociological analysis of geographic space,



technologies and the biological body. Some of the papers address epistemological cases stretching between “the geography of national identity” and “the human being living in the age of technical reproducibility”.

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Photo © Stefan Djambazov

## CAS Fellow Ivan Elenkov Wins Prize for Academic Achievements

On November 1st, 2014, Bulgaria's official Day of the Enlighteners, *Kultura*, the popular Bulgarian website for Culture, Art and Society, bestowed its prize in the Humanities category to Professor Ivan Elenkov for his book, *Labour, Joy, Recreation and Culture* (CAS/Riva Publishers, 2013) (<http://kultura.bg/web>).

*Kultura's* annual awards were established in 2014 by the *Comunitas Foundation*, which aims to encourage the creation of a sustainable civic society in Bulgaria and to stimulate the formation of an informed civil stance on topics of cultural and overall human significance.

Prof. Elenkov, a former CAS Fellow, was granted the distinguished award for his substantial contributions to the understanding of the ideological framework of everyday life under communism in Bulgaria. His work rests on studies carried out within the *CAS Advanced Academia Programme* (2010) for independent research in the fields of social sciences and the humanities.

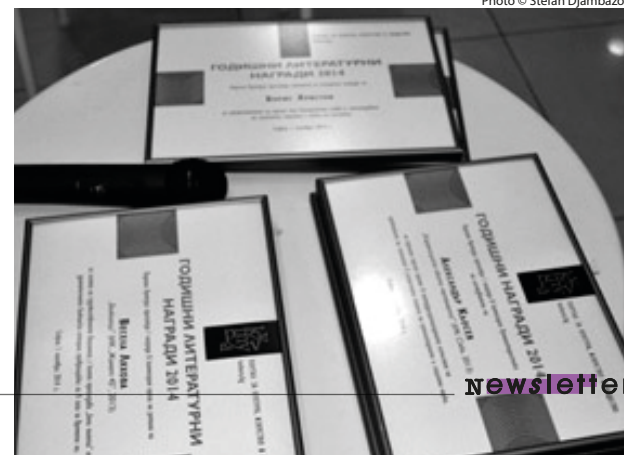


In his acceptance speech Prof. Elenkov expressed his gratitude to CAS Sofia, which, likewise, supported the publication of his study. He noted that this award is not only a sign of personal recognition, but also a tribute to the Bulgarian historiographical tradition dealing with well-established facts and authentic testimonies from the past.

CAS would like to cordially congratulate Prof. Ivan Elenkov on this well-deserved honour and wish him good luck in his future academic endeavours!\*

\* For further details on Prof. Ivan Elenkov's monograph and research at CAS, see *CAS Newsletters* 2010, pp. 12-13 and 2012/2013, p. 22.

Photo © Stefan Djambazov



## Dimitris Christopoulos Greece in Crisis: What is the Case with the Far Right and Migration

Professor Dimitris Christopoulos is a scholar and an activist. He studied law at the University of Komotini in Greek Thrace, after which he pursued his post-graduate studies in Political Science and European Studies at Robert Schuman University in Strasbourg, and in Legal Theory at the European Academy for Legal Theory in Brussels. He earned a doctoral degree in Public Law from the University Jules Verne of Picardie in France in 1996.

D. Christopoulos is a lecturer at the Department of Political Science and History of the Panteion University of Athens, where he teaches Theory of State and Human Rights, focusing on migration, minorities and citizenship. He has published widely in Greek, English, French, and other languages in scientific reviews and journals in the field of Legal and Political Theory on issues related to human rights, minorities, migrants, and citizenship.

D. Christopoulos is Vice-President of the International Federation for Human Rights, after having chaired the board of the Hellenic League for Human Rights from 2003

until 2011. He is frequently interviewed by international and Greek media and writes regularly for the Greek press and internet portals, thus contributing to the promotion of a culture of human rights awareness in the country, particularly during the Greek financial crisis.

In June 2014, he visited Sofia to conduct a comparative research project for Sofia University on narratives about transition and crisis in Greece and Bulgaria, with the support of the Centre for Advance Study Sofia. His lecture, on 23rd June 2014, attracted an inquisitive, eager audience that posed numerous questions in the nearly hour-long debate afterwards.

Why is the Greek far right considered to be probably one of the most extreme in Europe? Why is there Nazism, fascism or some other form of right-wing extremism in Greece?

If we search behind essentialist views that during the last few years have reproduced well-known stereotypes in Northern Europe about the Balkans

and Greece in particular, we will see that there is an explanation for everything, provided we search in a collected manner and without obsessive preconceptions. The answer is that in Greece there is indeed a convergence of all the adequate and necessary conditions of such a lamentable leading position of the far right. If the "historical depth" and the "ideological amplitude" of far-right infiltration are the rooted causes that explain the consolidation of a thoroughly totalitarian ideology, election-wise, in almost ten per cent of the electorate, there are still developments that effectively pulled the trigger, the so-called triggering events. Among these, one finds the intensification of immigration flows and the blatant failure of the Greek State to administer them institutionally – a failure exploited most effectively by Golden Dawn's discourse, especially in the difficult, immigrant-packed neighbourhoods of the city of Athens, where in 2010 the party won 5.3 per cent of the vote in the municipality and secured a seat at the City Council.

# When Crises Turn into Normality

## An Interview with Dimitris Christopoulos



Dimitris Christopoulos' lecture provided a reflection upon the origins of the far right in Greece today, as well as the set of events that prompted its rise. He also discussed possible perspectives of ways out of the current situation.

**You are in Sofia to conduct comparative research on the Greek and Bulgarian crisis. What aspects are you covering in particular?**

**Dimitris Christopoulos:** I am focusing on transition and narratives in the cases of Greece and Bulgaria; i.e., I am analyzing the discourses on the crisis as well as the narratives about the transition. In the last few years, it has been commonplace to say that we, Greeks, have become Bulgarians. I am exploring what is implied in this popular statement, and also whether it is justified and correct. What is happening in our two countries, what is the situation like here and there? Why did the Greeks choose Bulgaria as a match for the critical situation they are in; why didn't they select another country to compare themselves with?

**And what is your answer to these pertinent questions?**

**D. Ch.:** Following my hypothesis, in the eyes of the Greek public perception, Bulgarians are indeed the other, the poor, but they are the *normal poor*, i.e. somebody we can compete with but also compare ourselves with in the state of distress we have been in for the last four or five years. Conventionally, a crisis refers to an abnormal, precarious situation; it hits us but then it goes away and eventually, we manage to recover from it. Initially, this is how Greeks thought about their worsened financial and socio-economic conditions... However, the crisis came and stayed with us. In Greece, it has turned into a routine, into normality, into a state of transition to something that we are unable to identify yet.

At the same time, Bulgaria's transition period to a market-economy society has been going on for a long time. Your transition seems to have become a steady state here, which can be described as stability in unstable circumstances, an unchanging situation that may, indeed, produce some smaller or bigger hiccups such as the protests in winter 2013. Yet, overall, Bulgarians have stopped perceiving it as a crisis. This is how the Bulgarian case can contribute to a clarification of the Greek situation.

**However, tourists in Greece are impressed with the serene pace of life there, with the people taking peaceful walks down the sea boulevards ...**

**D. Ch.:** Of course, the beauty of nature and the attraction of the sea may paint an optimistic picture to tourists. But when you inquire about how people regard their situation, the other side of the coin becomes visible. There is a Bulgarian friend of mine who migrated to Greece in 1993 and is now a naturalized citizen there. When asked how she felt about the present economic conditions in Greece, she likened them to *déjà vu*; to her it felt like relapsing to the early 1990s in Bulgaria, when she saw her country collapse in no time. I asked her to describe her perception of the crisis and she gave me a twofold reply: "As a Greek, I am feeling frustrated; as a Bulgarian, I would say that this is life." This is why we need to study perceptions of and narratives about crises and transitions...

Bulgarians tend to say, "I wish I had your problems" and thus minimize others' troubles. But in my eyes, what is happening in Greece today may also affect other countries. If, in the 1990s, I had been told that Bulgaria's plight might befall Greece, I would have refused to accept any comparable prospect. We seemed (geographically) so close, yet, so distant then ... When talking about the Greek crisis, we emphasize its acuteness, i.e., we pay attention to its particularities. But no country is immune from similar developments today. What concerns Greece, may become a concern for all of Europe.

**What political agents would benefit the most from such a critical atmosphere in society?**

**D. Ch.:** There is no uniform reply to this question, as crises reverberate differently in different national political systems. In Greece, the crisis activated the left and the extreme right; in Italy, it brought forth a populist, anti-establishment, and Eurosceptic party.

The far right has always been a present political actor in Greek public life, though by 1974, when the Regime of the Colonels broke down, it had lost most of its credibility. However, forty years later, the crisis triggered the ascension of another far right political formation, Golden Dawn, which is finding links with the pre-1974, dictatorship past, and consolidating. Although there has always been a political crisis on the Greek agenda, it was rather "relaxed," without extreme manifestations. Now, there is a dangerous polarization on both sides of the political spectrum; there is no cooperation among the parties, as there was in the 1974 aftermath. Now, there is no consolidation within the Greek left, either. The Greek political elites have lost their legitimate public profile and suffer from social distrust. The Bulgarian case is similar; here, too, we witness a complete loss of public faith in politicians and institutions, or "in mistrust we trust" as written by a well-known scholar here.

**What particular aspects of the Greek crisis brought forth the rise of Golden Dawn in society?**

**D. Ch.:** One should not mechanically relate the rise of the far right to a crisis but rather to a combination of risky circumstances. As people's fear for the future grows, social-economic problems are transferred into the sphere of politics. This may add substance to extreme right-wing discourse. However, there is also the issue of political and institutional delegitimation, the sore problem of completely mishandled immigration. In such conditions, populist parties gain popularity as their political promises sound convincing.

In Greece, Golden Dawn's passionate rhetoric calling for an authentic, strong state, free of immigrants and corrupted politicians, has allure for certain social segments.

There is a historical aspect to Golden Dawn's success, too. Greece is a country that suffered uniquely during the Second World War; but there was also a dark side of Nazi collaboration to its history. After World War II, few Greek fascists and collaborators were marginalized or taken to court; instead, many were employed in the ensuing Greek Civil War to fight the "communist threat". Thus they provided legitimacy to the subsequent political system...

**Then, is it possible to temper the upsurge of the extreme right in modern-day societies?**

**D. Ch.:** The solution has to be related to the root of the problem. Not only has Europe been the cradle of democracy, but the bastion of totalitarian ideologies, too. A major issue we need to address today is the way we handle our history. We must learn about our past, but, besides emphasizing its glorious sides, we ought to highlight its less flattering, sad aspects, too. We shouldn't read about our victories only, or victimize ourselves in times of defeat. What we also need to do is to see what went wrong once. We need to change the way we learn history.

Interviewed by the Editor



## Biljana Dojčinović

### Documentary Elements in John Updike's Story "The Bulgarian Poetess" (1965)

On 28 May 2014, the Centre of Advanced Study welcomed Associate Professor, Biljana Dojčinović, for an exciting lecture that took her public back to the Cold War period of the 1960s, when an unsuspecting American writer met the Bulgarian poetess Blaga Dimitrova, "this central woman", in a "remote and bullied nation, in this room of morning light"... Their encounter amounted to John Updike's story, *The Bulgarian Poetess*, published in *The New Yorker* in March 1965.

Biljana Dojčinović is Associate Professor at the Department for Comparative Literature and Literary Theory at the Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Serbia. Her fields of study include Modernism, Literary Theory, Women's Writing, Digital Humanities, with the works of Henry James, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, John Updike, Jelena Dimitrijević as the focus of her research. She is the author of six books and Director of the research project *Knjiženstvo*, dealing with the theory and history of women's

writing in Serbia before 1915 ([www.knjizenstvo.rs](http://www.knjizenstvo.rs)). Dojčinović is also the editor-in-chief of the electronic journal *Knjiženstvo*.

Fifty years ago, in 1964, thirty-two-old John Updike toured the USSR and Eastern bloc nations under a year-old writer's exchange agreement between the United States Department of State and the Union of Soviet Writers. In the course of that tour he visited Sofia for four days in November, where he met a number of Bulgarian writers, including the poetess, Blaga Dimitrova. The encounter with Dimitrova made a deep impression on Updike – in March 1965 he published *The Bulgarian Poetess*, a story which won the *O. Henry Award* and gave birth to his literary alter-ego, Henry Bech.

B. Dojčinović's presentation was based on the research that she and Prof. Ward Briggs, from the University of South Carolina, had been conducting since June 2012. It attempted to trace how accurately the American author and cultural ambassador to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, John Updike, had described the people he had met in Bulgaria in 1964, as well as the events in which he had participated during his four full days in Sofia. Illustrated with slides from archival files, the presentation uncovered how close the story is to its historical, documentary material, and how carefully the author selected from the events of his sojourn in order to create a work of fiction. The lecture concluded by briefly treating the reception of the story and the subsequent contact between Updike and Dimitrova. It was followed by a lively discussion, reviving prominent literary figures from the recent past of both Bulgaria and the USA.



Talking with  
Former CAS Fellows:

**Evelina Kelbecheva**

**Kiril Tochkov**

**Stefania Costache**

**Grigor Boykov**

**Gregory Myers**

It has always been a great pleasure to converse with our Fellows during their stay at CAS. The broad range of their fields and subjects of interest, the multitude of their favored methodologies and theoretical perspectives, as well as their diverse native and scholarly backgrounds intrinsically add to the stimulating atmosphere of discussions both at an academic level, in the CAS conference hall, and informally, over a cup of tea or coffee in the lounge. Now, that their research period has expired, we approached some of them with the request to revisit their experience at CAS and share details about their work and time spent at the Centre with our reading audience.

**Prof. Evelina Kelbecheva** is a distinguished Bulgarian historian, Fulbright scholar and holder of Jean Monnet Title, with a keen interest in the multidisciplinary field of memory studies, myth making and falsifications in history. She teaches History to the diverse, multinational student community at the American University in Bulgaria.

**Dr Kiril Tochkov** earned his academic degrees in Chinese Studies and Economics in China, Germany, and the USA, and is currently Associate Professor at the Department of Economics, Texas Christian University, USA.

**Dr Stefania Costache** combines a degree in Political Science from the University of Bucharest with a Masters in Nationalism from Central European University, and a PhD in History from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

**Dr Grigor Boykov** studied History at Sofia University and specialized in Ottoman History, with a doctoral degree from Bilkent University, Turkey. He is actively involved in the Centre for Regional Studies and Analyses at Sofia University.

**Dr Gregory Myers** is an expert in Historical Musicology, with an MA and a PhD degree from the University of Virginia and the University of British Columbia, respectively. His passion for the sacred medieval chant of Slavia Orthodoxa has defined his love for the region.

We would like to cordially thank them for their time and wish them much success in their academic careers.



# Ignorance of history is responsible for political insensitivity and dictatorship nostalgia...

**Evelina Kelbecheva**



**You have been actively exploring the construction and deconstruction of historical memories, as opposed to the grand narrative of ONE historical memory. Your CAS fellowship aimed to expand your former findings by incorporating the memories of the post-1989 generation in a broader, Bulgarian – East European – West European comparative perspective, and including interviews with Bulgarian migrants abroad. Did your new results confirm your expectations?**

**Evelina Kelbecheva:** The results of my interviews with representatives of the Bulgarian diaspora in the United States confirmed my working hypothesis: when asked to name the most significant figures in history, young people's answers revealed how impacted they were by their Bulgarian school lessons. There was a marked difference in the responses within the cohort of the fortyish-to-sixtyish-year-olds, though. The majority of them were political émigrés; they voted for Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and Mikhail Gorbachev as the most influential people in history.

I could identify a similar difference of choice when I analyzed the outcome of the survey conducted amongst students at the American University in Bulgaria. My respondents came from former communist countries in the Balkans and the post-Soviet states, and they were asked to determine the most significant people, places and moments in history. Their answers were dominated by their national topoi, but there was a clear concentration of responses related to the Second World War. In Western Europe and the Balkans alike, the most significant sites of memory focused on the twentieth century. Earlier ages were not an option there. But this conclusion was in stark contrast to the Bulgarian responses.

When interviewed about central historical events, Bulgarians symptomatically would choose the *Battle*, the *War*, the *Uprising*. Everyone spoke proudly of the drinking cup that Bulgarian Khan Krum was said to have made from Byzantine king Nikephoros' skull in the ninth century. However, little was known about the fate of Bulgarian medieval manuscripts.

I believe that even today, the quest for identity connected to the *Heroic*, the *Grand*, the *Romantic* and the *Happily Ever After* is very strong amongst Bulgarians. However, for me, history is a source of knowledge; it is meant to inspire critical analysis and self-understanding, rather than serve as a cradle of superiority, pride and ... hate.

**What can be inferred about the "ethics" of historical memory then?**

**E. K.:** The second stage of my research convinced me that the term "historical memory" might be inappropriate when discussing the "choice of history," i.e. the "choice of values" from my perspective. Eventually, what is examined and analyzed is revealing of what has been selected, and how it has been taught and popularized as historical knowledge. Also, it pinpoints the agent – the state institutions and the media. Every Bulgarian youngster knows about the "Turkish yoke." However, few know about our most recent history, whose legacy is alive and with us. My research confirmed that overall, Bulgarian citizens – including the Bulgarian diaspora abroad – have a uniform answer to questions touching on the most significant figures, places and events in history, and uniformly choose Vassil Levski, Shipka, and the Liberation\*. ... Let me quote a study conducted by British Professor Alistair Ross, "Young Europeans' Constructions of Identity and Citizenship: Crossing European Borders (2010–2014)." While visiting a number of secondary schools around Bulgaria, he was confronted with identical answers: 99.99% of Bulgarian students derived their national self-esteem from "our glorious history" and "beautiful scenery." Naturally, the students' answers did not

go beyond the First World War. Beyond that landmark was blankness. The young generation has internalized and is repeating the clichés of the past. However, this fixation with old history manifests a lack of self-worth and a want of a vision of the new time we are living in. Our vision of the new time is a direct consequence of a recent, twisted, banned, maimed history and a horrid failure to understand the mimicries of communism in Bulgaria.

**How then is the communist past construed in Bulgarian public memory?**

**E. K.:** Studies indicate that only a tiny percentage of Bulgarians are interested in the communist past. Those who are, positively equate it to the regime of Todor Zhivkov, Bulgaria's long-term head of state and leader of the Bulgarian Communist Party. However, there is a clear delineating line between the younger and older generations, between the urban city and small provincial town or the countryside, between the intellectuals and the undereducated. A study conducted by the former National Centre for Public Opinion Research within the age group 15–35 revealed that young people linked "Gulag" to the Internet search engine (Google), while eighty per cent of the respondents had never heard about the concentration camps in Bulgaria under communism.

**What are the reasons behind these deplorable statistics?**

**E. K.:** Sixty to eighty percent of my respondents have indicated schoolbooks as the main source of their knowledge of history. The implications are plain: ignorance about the recent past, installed in younger generations, is a well-drafted strategy on the part of the state institutions in charge of education, as well as of those highly dependent mass media. This becomes evident once you analyze how history textbooks are written and how history has been taught at school. Our entire educational system is hopelessly inadequate for the needs of modern society. History education in Bulgaria is very conservative and dominated by ethno-centric and nationalistic feelings. Of course, there are modern textbooks, with a novel, critical approach to history. However, they remain isolated, outside the limelight of the public eye. Here comes the problem with the way history is interpreted and taught at school. It is the paucity of knowledge and lack of critical thinking that generates the nightmares of "historical hatred" – the key resource of populism as well as the source of "historical gratitude" ... This total ignorance of recent history is accountable for manifold severe distortions in civic behaviour, ranging from political insensitivity to dictatorship nostalgia...

Interviewed by the Editor



\* Vasil Levski, dubbed *The Apostle of Freedom*, is a Bulgarian national hero who ideologized and strategized a revolutionary movement to liberate Bulgaria from Ottoman rule. *Shipka* is a pass through the Balkan mountain where the crucial battles between the Russian troops, aided by Bulgarian volunteers, and the Ottoman army were fought in the period July 1877–January 1878, ending with the Ottomans' defeat. *The Liberation* refers to the aftermath of the Russian-Turkish War of 1877–1878 when the Bulgarian state was re-established on the map of Europe.

# Back to the great leaps forward...

Kiril Tochkov



Finally, how would you evaluate your stay at CAS?

**K.T.:** My fellowship at CAS was an amazing experience, and I have been recommending it to colleagues of mine. I am an economist and a China scholar, but my project also requires an intimate knowledge of Bulgarian history and archival sources. At CAS I had the chance to learn a great deal in that regard from experienced scholars like Roumen Avramov and Diana Mishkova, and I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for their help and support. Another major benefit was the interdisciplinary environment at CAS. I received invaluable feedback on my project from other fellows from various academic fields, which certainly enriched my perspective and improved my scholarship. Last but not least, the weekly seminars at CAS were a great forum for meeting interesting people and exchanging ideas.

Interviewed by the Editor

Just a decade or two ago, China was perceived in Eastern Europe as a far-away, exotic fairyland. Therefore, comparing China's economic development under Communism with Bulgaria's is a most extraordinary research topic. What inspired the choice of target-countries in your comparative study?

**Kiril Tochkov:** I have been fascinated with China from an early age. When I was growing up in Bulgaria in the 1970s and 1980s, there were barely any contacts between the two countries. There was not even a single Chinese restaurant in Bulgaria at the time. From conversations with people from my grandfather's generation, I learned that in the 1950s China and Bulgaria had a very close relationship, which fell victim to the Sino-Soviet split in the early 1960s. This was a big surprise to me, and ever since I have wanted to explore this topic in more detail.

Your CAS research settled upon a comparative analysis of China's "Great Leap" (1958–1961) – enacted through enforced land collectivization – and

Bulgaria's subsequent agricultural experience in the 1960s, once the Chinese model was transferred to Bulgarian soil. What surprised you most about your findings?

**K. T.:** The few studies on the topic view the Great Leap Forward in Bulgaria either as a complete copy of the Chinese campaign or as an indigenous effort with barely anything to do with China other than the borrowed label. My findings show that the situation was much more complicated. There is no question that China's campaign had a major impact on the Bulgarian leadership's decision to adopt a similar approach to development. Moreover, major policies, like endorsing completely unrealistic production targets or consolidating agricultural collectives into larger units, closely mirrored the Chinese model. The most surprising fact for me was that these policies were implemented at a time of worsening Sino-Soviet relations and were thus bound to cause deep irritation in the Soviet Union. As a result, the "Chinese aspect" was toned down at a later stage of the

campaign, but the policies continued unabated and led to a major economic crisis in Bulgaria.

China's social experiment followed Eastern Europe's experience in rural collectivisation by nearly a decade, rather than preceding it. What was unique about the Chinese experiment, and what major lesson does it teach us about the economic logic of the common vs. the private?

**K. T.:** The main goal of the Great Leap Forward, namely to showcase the superiority of the Communist system by catching up with advanced economies in record time, was similar to those of previous campaigns in the Soviet Union. But the implementation had some unique features, such as regulations prohibiting cooking in private homes and forcing people to eat in communal halls. Moreover, the scale and speed of the disastrous impact were unprecedented, at least for the second half of the twentieth century. Within less than three years, the economy of China was completely wrecked and



"How the narrative about development and backwardness came about..."

Stefania Costache



**Your research at CAS deals with the politics of European investments in the Ottoman Empire, 1850–1880, and you approach your topic from the perspective of profit and progress. But isn't this yet another reiteration of the clichéd stereotype of European modernity versus Ottoman backwardness?**

**Stefania Costache:** In my research, I play with the term "progress" to trigger a reaction to this well-established narrative about the developed, West European centre versus the "backward" periphery. This image is rooted in the political imbalance of power, which made itself obvious in the nineteenth century. Instead, I try to question this seemingly unshakable narrative by investigating the origins and evolution of the historical discourse that associated technological and financial innovations with economic development. In the nineteenth century, the discourse about the promises of progress gained supporters both in the Western and East-

ern empires. States such as the Ottoman Empire embraced the idea of progress as a panacea, a solution to all their problems. The French and British Empires assessed how they could harness international progress to uphold their power overseas. Yet the means for achieving this progress were still to be expounded, especially when they were related to securing solid financial investments in foreign sovereign debts or in railroad construction.

In my study, therefore, I am not measuring the development of France or underdevelopment of the Ottoman Empire. Instead, I examine how this narrative about the development or backwardness of a state came about, how people thought about progress and what they expected from it. Why would the French state want to export progress to the Ottomans? To help them catch up and reach western levels of growth, or to serve an imperialistic aim and turn them into their subordinates? The answer is not one-sided...

**Through whose eyes are you relating the story of profit and advancement then?**

**S. C.:** I focus specifically on what we call "experts" today. Those were bankers, financiers, businessmen – people who served as mediators of economic exchange. Over the course of time, while travelling around the Ottoman Empire and starting companies there, they assumed an identity of authority, thus claiming knowledge and expertise about the Ottoman Empire itself or about the complications of international transactions. While they paid tribute to the visions of power of their metropolis, they did not entirely mimic the French imperialistic discourse, but became more emancipated about their own vision of international transactions and power relations.

There are also the smaller, self-made, or less influential entrepreneurs who were



particularly active in this period, making changes by persuading more serious bankers to pursue investment in riskier ventures.

Another group of agents I am paying attention to is that of the Ottoman diplomats who served as mediators in economic relations between the Ottoman Empire and the European powers. They tried to work on behalf of the Ottoman Empire to secure a steady flow of loans at a time of mounting suspicion about the credit of the Ottoman Empire and of revolts and foreign intervention on behalf of the Christian communities in the Empire.

Over all, I am exploring the world of people who negotiated international transactions and progress.

**Who profited eventually?**

**S. C.:** A good question... The investors

were the managers of joint-stock companies and the profit should have gone to them, as well as to the creditors participating in these companies. However, what if their businesses did not fare so well or, as in one famous case, went bankrupt, threatening the Ottomans with a financial crisis? This raised the question of whether the state should be in a position to intervene on behalf of its nationals who invested abroad and to force foreign debtors into paying their debts. In this situation, a state could clearly also pursue its political agenda at the expense of the foreign debtor. So it is not only the financial profit of big businessmen but also of small investors and also the state's political capital that is at stake. Let's say, profit is multi-layered...

**What are your future plans after leaving Sofia and CAS?**

**S. C.:** Once I complete my paper for CAS Working Series, I hope to make further

aspects of my work publishable in a peer-reviewed journal. I also would like to engage the broader public in my research by writing a series of smaller articles for the Romanian media. Currently, there is mounting interest in the historical evolution of international investments and the role of financial experts.

**Did you benefit from your stay at CAS?**

**S. C.:** Undoubtedly. I got valuable feedback on my work from both Faculty and Fellows. I had an excellent collaboration with Professor Avramov. I also had easy access to research resources, as I could order and purchase books thanks to my research allowance here. My stay at CAS was definitely very useful. Thank you very much for having me.

Interviewed by the Editor

# "The architectural legacy is universal..."

Grigor Boykov



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**Your research targets the spatial transformations and urban morphologies of Ottoman cities. What inspired your interest towards Ottoman architecture in the Balkans?**

**Grigor Boykov:** My interest grew from my research in the field of Balkan historical demography, which covered the transitional period from a Balkan-Byzantine legacy to an Ottoman reality. Demography studies population, but the space people live in, the infrastructure of which they transform and adapt to their needs, is equally important. This made me look into how upon their conquest of the Balkans, the Ottomans began to change the urban space there and adjust it to their desires and vision.

**In your work, you use the term "Ottomanization" in inverted commas. What is the rationale for that?**

**G. B.:** My use of inverted commas stems from the rather ambiguous interpretation of the process of "Ottomanization" in academia, especially amongst Balkan

historiographers, who tend to interpret it as a process of Turkification. Yet, like any century-old empire, the Ottoman Empire, too, underwent development and change according to the various political forces and public attitudes in play. What was considered "Ottoman" in the seventeenth century differed from what was regarded as "Ottoman" in the nineteenth century, when in the Tanzimat period of reforms and reorganization, the imperial doctrine took on a new meaning. Without inverted commas the term "Ottomanization" would demarcate something invariable, i.e. a constant...

**If not diachronically uniform, was the process of "Ottomanization" a synchronically identical experience for the entire Ottoman Empire?**

**G. B.:** The changes that the composition of Balkan towns underwent in the process of Ottoman conquest were not uniform: some towns ended up with a predominantly Muslim population, and this radically changed the entire urban space. In Edirne, Plovdiv, Sofia, etc., the

changes were dramatic and severed the former Balkan-Byzantine tradition. In Edirne, the Ottoman city spilled outside the late-Byzantine fortress and spread out to define a new urban centre and periphery. Other towns preserved their largely non-Muslim population and simply had an Ottoman garrison stationed there. Hence they experienced minor changes in their infrastructure – mostly the building of a mosque and/or a *hammam* (a Turkish bath) to serve religious purposes. In towns like Asenovgrad, the presence of the Muslim population was extremely limited throughout the entire Ottoman rule in the Balkans. They developed their urban space along the earlier, Balkan-Byzantine tradition.

Nor should one ignore the state of relations between the centre and the periphery, i.e. between state power and local, border authorities, in the Ottoman Empire. This was often marked by tension, which left an impact on Ottoman urban development. Major cities like Edirne and Plovdiv were "ottomanized" in a way that corresponded to the central authorities'



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visions of what modern urban spaces should look like. However, the urban space in the borderlands took on different shapes...

**Did the process of Ottoman urbanization and architectural transformations in the Balkans bear the stamp of distinct power relationships?**

**G. B.:** A number of the newly erected buildings had a representative function. The grandiosity of those constructions, as well as the scope of finances invested in them, sent a clear message to both the local population and the neighbouring countries that the Ottomans intended to fortify their presence in the Balkans and make it permanent there, too.

However, it is a product of our overtly nationalistic minds to visualize the Ottoman conquest as a period of blood-spattered havoc disrupting any legacy with the past. Freed from such preconceptions, we will better understand the pragmatic motivation of people in former times, and also be able to see how many Ottoman buildings incorporate Christian symbols. The Ottomans did not shy away from utilizing the plentitude of Byzantine building material to transform the urban space, and thus managed to adjust the available Christian symbols to their needs.

**To what extent has Ottoman urban morphology been preserved in Bulgaria today?**

**G. B.:** The state of the Ottoman architectural legacy in Bulgaria is varied, and is informed by the distribution of political power after the Liberation. At that time, the Bulgarian territories were divided into a principality, with a Russian provisional government, and an autonomous region, Eastern Roumelia, under the supervision of the European Powers. In the Principality, the approach towards the Ottoman architectural heritage was one of intentional destruction as the Russians sought to replace it with modern urban infrastructure and design. This served the sprouting feelings of nationalism well. As a result, there are only three Ottoman mosques left in Sofia, two of which have been transformed into, respectively, a church and an archeological museum. In Eastern Roumelia, the approach to the Ottoman urban legacy differed, as it was incorporated successfully in Plovdiv's modern urban regulations. Streets were widened; blind alleys were opened and made passable. In fact, today Plovdiv's commercial city centre is the once transformed *Uzun Çarşı* (shopping centre)... Unfortunately, later events, including a disastrous earthquake, compounded by human shortsightedness and historical ignorance, led to the gradual disappearance of some of the emblematic Ottoman heritage there, too.

The worst came during the so-called "Revival Process"\* in the 1980s, when instead of being renovated, a multitude of century-old Ottoman constructions were intentionally neglected, and thus left to their demise. Such was the political situation then, but little has changed since then. Yet the architectural legacy is universal ... it belongs to mankind...

**How would you describe your stay at CAS?**

**G. B.:** I had a magnificent time here. I met wonderful people, Fellows of various academic backgrounds. Our interaction has enriched me and I have taken under consideration their remarks in my forthcoming article. I believe we will stay in touch for a long time.

Interviewed by the Editor

\* The "Revival Process" was the official euphemism for the forced assimilation of the Turkish minority during the last stage of the communist regime in Bulgaria in the 1980s.

"If you want to study this music, you have to go back to its sources."

## Gregory Myers

**You have been at CAS for five months working on a topic that seems an extraordinary choice for a Canadian: Music and Urban Ritual in Slavia Orthodoxa. How did this project catch your interest?**

**Gregory Myers:** I actually joined the Russian Orthodox Church forty years ago for reasons I can't really explain. I entered one day and said to myself: "I like it here". The community was made up of Russians and was very welcoming. Since then, the Eastern Church has become part of my life. As a musician, I needed to broaden my interests and so took over the direction of the church choir.

Initially I did not like the music, but I kept asking questions and found out that there was a lot to investigate in this field. I decided to study with a Serbian specialist on Byzantine music in the United States. That was the beginning. Since then, I have never looked back, but kept researching. I felt that if you want to study this music, you have to go back to its sources. My sources are in Eastern Europe and so I found myself first in Moscow, at the Mos-

cow State Conservatory, at a not very easy time, and then here, in Sofia, to continue my research.

For me, this music is a kind of endless fascination, and with the considerable political changes in Eastern Europe and the opening up to religious freedom, it has also become a *very vibrant field* of study, especially in Eastern and Central Europe. In North America, not so much ...

**How distinct is Eastern Orthodox Church music if compared to its equivalent in the West?**

**G. M.:** There are crossing points, especially when you go back to the early Middle Ages, where the division between Byzantine East and Latin West was not so pronounced. When we march forward in time, the differences become more disparate. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, places like Russia embraced a very western choral tradition. The interest in the plainchant, which is the Eastern Church equivalent of Gregorian chant, was renewed only lately.

**Your prime focus of academic interest at CAS is the Marian feasts. Can you tell us more about them?**

**G. M.:** A Marian feast is any celebration to do with the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is very venerated in the Catholic West, and very much so in the Eastern Orthodox Churches, too. The feasts basically chronicle her life: her Birth, her Presentation in the temple, the Annunciation that she would be the mother of Christ, and her falling asleep – her so-called Dormition, uspeniya – in August. I thought the Marian feast would be a good starting point because of the materials available to work on. Of course, much depends on what primary material is there. I have actually modified my research a little bit, so as to take in some other celebrations, too, and ended up finding a lot of raw material on this topic.

**Can you see a difference between Greek, Russian, and Bulgarian Orthodox music now?**

**G. M.:** There are differences, of course, the main one being language. When we talk

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about anything to do with the Eastern Church, the place of origin was Jerusalem and largely Constantinople, where the service books and the musical books were in Greek. When you move out of the Greek-speaking world into the Balkan region – Bulgaria and Serbia, and then eventually Russia – the opportunities for comparing this music are very good. It turns out that in those early days there is very little separating these traditions. I am concentrating on the South Slavic sources, and there is a lot of stuff here in Bulgaria.

**How then did you learn about the Centre for Advanced Study? Did your stay here live up to your expectations?**

**G. M.:** Absolutely, CAS is a real little jewel! Although I had been here before, at the

*Ivan Duijcev Centre* in Sofia, it was by chance that my wife came upon the Centre while searching through websites on the Internet. I applied and was delighted when I was accepted. I am going to miss it here – the peace and quiet where I was able to give priority to my work, which, otherwise, would not normally happen.

**During your stay here, you also got involved in a concert...**

**G. M.:** My wife, who is a wonderful Bulgarian pianist, and I have always believed one should not confine oneself to one area of specialization only, but take an active interest in the music of one's time. Thus, together with pianist Angela Tosheva, we put together a concert here – a collage of piano music, performed at the concert hall of the Bulgarian National Radio,

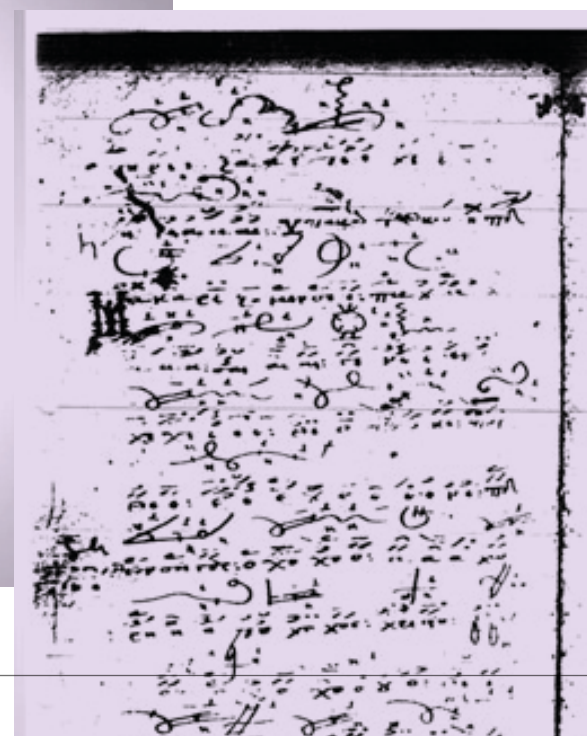
called *Timeless Circles*. It consisted of three pieces linked by the common minimalist aesthetics of repetition and continuity, and combining a lot of visual and multimedia effects. It was successful; we had a good audience and parts of it were broadcast on the Radio.

**If you had to describe your stay here in three words, which three words would you choose?**

**G. M.:** Comfortable ... different ... interesting.

Interviewed by the Editor

## Musical Performance Practice in Slavica Orthodoxa, 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Centuries





## Encounters with the "State"

### Mihai Olaru

Before the Meter.  
Uniformization of Measures  
and State Power  
in Wallachia and Moldavia,  
1775–1831

### Grigor Boykov

"The Carrot & the Stick":  
The Go-betweens of Early Modern  
Ottoman Imperial Doctrine

### Rory Yeomans

Resistance in the Marketplace:  
How Black Marketeers, Social Parasites  
and Unscrupulous Traders Impeded  
the Construction of the National  
Economy in Fascist Croatia

*Encounters with the "State"* was convened by CAS Fellow Mihai Olaru, inspired by the interdisciplinary 1985 volume, *Bringing the State Back In* (Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Theda Skocpol). The book approached the state as an active agent shaping the dynamics of social processes and political outcomes. However, the workshop was not conceived as yet another attempt to conceptualize the institutional need for "bringing it back" in our lives. Instead, it rested on the belief that the state is already there, to an extent which is seldom questioned, but not often understood. What was required, according to Dr Olaru, was further reflection on its role and place in academia, as:

First, in modern times, the state has had its undoubted impact on all research: there has been hardly a subject of investigation left untouched, and hardly any area of social reality unaffected by the presence and the construction of the state.

Second, a great amount of evidence and secondary literature employed in History and Social Science studies has been the product of institutions, or produced in a context dominated by the modern nation state. Hence it has inevitably left its imprint on academic research, since scholars' questions and conclusions have to a significant degree been marked by it. The workshop addressed current epistemological and methodological discourses, mostly in the form of recommendations to minimize the state and reduce its intervention in society, the more so in that its presence is coupled to a trend of increased surveillance capacity. The aim was to problematize the concept, historicize it, and question definitions that claim universal applicability.

The organizer and participants in the workshop observed that for a long time, the state had been viewed unproblematically as a discrete social fact, objectively differentiated from its "others" (society, economy, civil society, etc.), or more concretely, as a coherent set of institutions performing a series of functions (the most defining being the legitimate exercise of violence).

However, more recent reflections have moved towards an understanding of the state as a cultural artifact whose unity,

## Beyond the black market?

- Economic history integral to understanding full picture
- Individual actions don't have to be representative
- Lots of ways of showing dissent/dissatisfaction but not necessarily resistance
- Resistance not always evidence of opposition

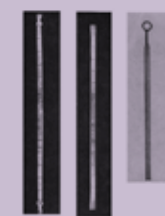
baniță (bushel)



Oca (pint) for liquids



cotul (ell)



stânjen (fathom)



coherence, and separation from society are discursively produced. As a result, it has been increasingly imagined and instantiated as an ontologically objective and morally neutral entity. Empirically, *encounters with the "state"* can thus be understood as a very broad range of interactions between its representatives and historical subjects.

The participants in the workshop made an intriguing attempt to assess their own

studies within the outlined theoretical framework. The presentations focused on the imperial ideology in the seventeenth-century Ottoman Empire, the nascent standardization of weights and measures in Wallachia and Moldavia (c. 1740–1848), and normative acts in fascist, Ustaša, Croatia (1941–1945), thus exploring the symbolic construction of the state through administrative practices.



## CAS Advanced Academia Programme: Individual Fellowships 2015–2016

### Bulgarian Module

March – July 2015



**Dimitrina Popova**

MArch (Architecture, University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy), PhD (Theory and History of Architecture, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)  
*Affiliation:* Independent Scholar

*Field of Study:* **Theory and History of Architecture**

**Project Title:**  
**Vernacular Urban Design Networks  
in the Post-Socialist Public Spaces  
between the Prefabricated Concrete  
Apartment Buildings of Sofia**

My project will study the residential areas with prefabricated concrete apartment buildings in Sofia from the novel perspective of architectural urban heritage. Prefabricated concrete apartment buildings were designed and built in a bygone period, related to Bulgaria's history under socialism. Generations of Sofia citizens grew up in them, and for many these prefabricated concrete complexes are still their home. My research adopts a new view towards urban conservation, inspired by the theoretician and architect Kenet Framton's view that "The *arrière-garde* approach of architecture has the capacity to cultivate a resistant, identity-giving culture". Hence the study is more concerned with preserving the poetics of the old quarters of the socialist past, i.e. their "spatial spirit," rather than advocating for doubtful policies of renovating the individual panel buildings with energy efficiency projects. The concept of urban architectural heritage is a new trend, especially when it concerns the urban fabric rather than individual buildings.

My objective is to test the potential of vernacular networks of self-made urban artifacts that seized the public spaces around the prefabricated concrete apartment buildings during the last twenty-five years, and explore the transition of socialist quarters into contemporary urban environments.

Over 200,000 prefabricated concrete apartments were built in Sofia under socialism, and currently the city's architecture holds a morphological contradiction identified by two spatial layers: one that contains the past, socialist urban heritage, characterized by institutional orthogonal planning, extra-large scale, unified and repetitive architectural schemes, and reinforced concrete; and another, post-socialist one, with a vernacular design of organic distribution that exhibits practicality and uniqueness, and employs small scale, ephemeral materials. Recently, Sofia Municipality has been considering projects to renovate and improve the energy efficiency of the city's prefabricated concrete apartments, which have fallen into decline. However, what is not taken into consideration are the locally made artifacts in which Sofia's public space abounds and whose vernacular design patterns have contributed to the appearance of a place-conscious poetic. My project will identify a certain potential in these vernacular urban design networks, and suggest an alternative approach to both rescuing and renovating the socialist complexes appropriately.



**Elka Dimitrova-Willis**

MA (Bulgarian Language and Literature, Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridski"), PhD (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences)  
*Affiliation:* Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

*Field of study:* **Literature, Culture, History**

**Project Title:**  
**The Marginal Intellectual**

This research project will address the figure of the marginal intellectual by incorporating sources derived from Bulgarian literature, culture, philosophy, and literary and cultural criticism, and explore it with particular reference to the appropriate social, cultural, and political contexts. Central figures of investigation are the twentieth-century Bulgarian writers, philosophers, and literary and cultural critics Dimo Kyorchev, Kiril Krastev and Tsvetan Stoyanov and their circles, viewed in the frame of Bulgarian, European, and American cultural relations. The aims of the research are to reveal under-explored aspects of Bulgarian culture; restore the actual importance of some of its underestimated agents; investigate the collaboration between national and universal values, with a view to certain crucial social and political circumstances; add to the knowledge of intellectuals' role in Bulgarian society; study the phenomenon of intellectuals' marginality, both within the Bulgarian setting and with a view to their corresponding world context; and elucidate some historical cultural processes of fundamental importance to our contemporary culture, especially those concerning the conceptual area of modernity, modernism, and their postmodern reflections and metamodern reminiscences.

In particular, I will focus on the works, creative life, and social place of Dimo Kyorchev, Kiril Krastev, and Tsvetan Stoyanov as representative figures of Bulgarian intellectuals related to world culture (European and American). Their complex, political, social, and cultural setting (the immediate decades after Bulgaria's Liberation and opening up to European culture for Kyorchev; the European *avant-garde* and the first decades of communist rule in Bulgaria for Krastev; the communist regime for Stoyanov) left a defining imprint on their creative work, and delineated them as "outsiders" in their environment. However, my study will claim that there were also inner, cultural, and personal factors that contributed to their marginalization.

The questions to be addressed are: To what degree was the solitude of these intellectuals

in society related to the fact that they had a "different," "dissident" social profile, including a sensitivity to cultures and values different from their own? Then, how did their ideas and convictions survive and remain in Bulgaria's cultural memory, forming an active background of values and potentials for new ideas? What determines their importance today? Could this have contributed to a process of cultural continuity or perhaps to an unconscious transfer of values and ideas "saturating" the spirit of time? And two final subquestions: What made Bulgarian cosmopolitanism unacceptable in Bulgaria in its "most European" period, the first half of the twentieth century? Why did cosmopolitanism prove such a contested value in the atmosphere of internationalism stretching from 1944 to the 1980s?



**Konstantin Golev**

BA (Archival Studies, Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridski"), MA (Archival Studies, History, Sofia University), PhD (History, Sofia University)  
*Affiliation:* Centre for Eastern Languages and Studies, Sofia University

*Field of Study:* **Medieval History**

**Project Title:**  
**Witch-hunt in the Court of the Great Khan (Magic, Superstition, and their Political Usage in the Mongol Empire during the Thirteenth Century)**

The phenomenon of the witch-hunt is an important aspect of the development of the medieval societies in Western and Central Europe, and attracted considerable attention in the contemporary Humanities on both sides of the "Iron Curtain". A number of researchers in the ex-socialist countries focused on "anathematizing" these events as part of their attempts

to expose the hypocrisy and decadent nature of the spiritual establishments of the modern West, mainly through criticism of the Catholic Church. The last few decades witnessed a shift in the historiography of witch-hunt research away from interpretations of specific political events within their "national narratives" to the study of defined categories and personages in the medieval man's spiritual world. Although fruitful in its approach, this new historiographic trend is heavily marked by its Eurocentric attitude.

However, the phenomenon of the witch-hunt permeated territories far broader than the medieval Catholic world, and similar events were documented in both Latin and Persian sources, as well as in other European and Asian societies, including in the court of the Great Mongol Khans in the mid-thirteenth century. The detailed examination of these cases is of considerable importance, as it may demonstrate that the genesis of the witch-hunt is not necessarily confined to Catholic Europe or to Christendom in general, but may also exist in fundamentally different confessional and cultural environments.

The proposed research aims to analyze the development of the persecutions against witches in the Great Mongol Empire, where different lifestyles flourished and many local and world confessions coexisted, and to compare them with similar events in Western and Central Europe, thus highlighting their common and distinctive characteristics. The questions to be answered include: Why does witch-hunting in the Mongolian case share so many similarities with corresponding European phenomena? Were the repressions of the witch-hunt used against political opponents, either through their physical extermination or by channelling public opinion in a particularly negative direction?

My research will analyze a collection of reports in primary sources by approaching the latter from a comparative perspective and interpreting the events in thirteenth-century Inner Asia in a multidisciplinary, synchronous, and diachronous context.

October 2015 – February 2016



**Alexandar Kanev**

MA and PhD (Philosophy, Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridski")  
*Affiliation:* Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridski"

*Field of Study:* **Philosophy**

**Project Title:**  
**Human Understanding: Finitude,  
Incommensurability, and Plurality**

The aim of this project is to shed important light on the nature, limits, and plurality of human understanding by developing a new conception of its finitude.

There are both epistemic and non-epistemic reasons for the existence of different kinds of understanding. Generally speaking, the non-epistemic reasons are ontological or psychological in nature. However, diverse kinds of objects may call for diverse ways of understanding. It is natural to assume that the differences between mathematical understanding and historical understanding are related to the differences between their objects. On the other hand, understanding may be motivated by substantially different interests such as scientific, religious, aesthetic, etc. Different kinds of interests seem to promote different kinds of understanding of (certain phenomena in) the world.

Besides, there are epistemic sources of the plurality of understanding. In my view, they lie ultimately in its finitude.

The project will pursue the following working hypotheses:  
First, the nature and varieties of human understanding of reality are related to its finitude.

Second, the finitude of understanding manifests itself particularly in the limitations of the a priori access to the necessary conditions of phenomena.

In addition, these limitations imply that there is incommensurability between the logical space of understanding and the logical space of its objects.

Moreover, the phenomenon of incommensurability is essentially related to the nature of representation and indicates the structural limitations of the different kinds of understanding of reality.

Finally, the competition of incommensurable conceptions transforms the boundaries of human understanding.

To achieve its objectives, the proposed study will employ diverse philosophical methods, such as conceptual and metaphysical analysis, transcendental arguments, and thought experiments.



**Maria Kalinova**

BA (Bulgarian Philology, Sofia University "St K. Ohridski"), MA (Theory of Literature, Sofia University), PhD (Bulgarian Literature of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries – National Revival Periods, Sofia University)  
*Affiliation:* Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridski"

*Field of study:* **Theory of Literature, Bulgarian Literature of the National Revival Period, Epistolary Culture**

**Project Title:**  
**The Logic of Dissent and Bulgarian Revival Correspondence from the 1830s and 40s**

The study will focus on the political and cultural uses of the letter and related correspondence practices during the 1830s and 1840s in Bulgaria, a period crucial for the history of Bulgarian Revival epistolary culture. These decades marked a peak in the art of letter writing in Bulgaria, when letters provided an important opportunity for public reflection and discussion in the absence of a developed Bulgarian press (newspapers and magazines). Specifically, the present study targets the problem of censorship and the logic of dissent in the correspondence of Bulgarian Revival intellectuals. The presence of censorship was first noted in the 1920s and 1930s by the literary critic Ivan Shishmanov, who interpreted the use of cryptography by popular Bulgarian Revival figures as a means to escape persecu-

tion and surveillance. The empirical material this study will focus on is the encrypted letters exchanged within certain intellectual, artistic, and diplomatic circles around Neofit Rilski.

A practical contribution of the project will be its attempt to decipher a number of yet unpublished letters, as well as the verification of those already published. Next, applying an interdisciplinary approach, the proposed research will analyse different processes of control on the reception of letters.

In a broader theoretical perspective, the specific issues under discussion will contribute to a better understanding of the connection between the dissent of "the other" and the establishment and reproduction of the community. The analysis will test the following epistemological propositions: Does Bulgarian cryptography in the 1830s–1840s comply with or rather counter the macro-framework of the European Enlightenment, its patterns and structures? How does the European Enlightenment and its need to protect and hide rational communication from public exposure impact the detour of censorship in the Bulgarian case? Do the transformations of the individual epistolary and art practices in the intellectual circle around Neofit Rilski generate a genealogical connection between cryptography and a new artistic genre of dissent, such as the Bulgarian Revival acrostic?

Overall, the project hopes to expand the understanding of epistolary culture in the Bulgarian Revival period, and demonstrate the potential resonances of the letters in the political context of the Ottoman Empire.



**Moris Fadel**

MA (Bulgarian Philology and Philosophy, Sofia University "St K. Ohridski"), PhD (History and Interpretation in Paul De Man's Views)  
*Affiliation:* New Bulgarian University

*Field of study:* **History and Theory of Literature**

**Project Title:**  
**The Success Story of Communist Literature: The Spy Novel**

This project aims to explore one of the few popularly successful sectors of the so-called "official literature" (i.e. literature tied to the ideology of the ruling party) in the period of the communist regime: the spy novel. The appeal of this genre in Eastern Europe and Russia was immense. Two issues about this attractiveness deserve specific attention. First, the attraction to the genre is entirely spontaneous. It is true that spy novels enjoyed huge circulation and were adapted for film, but audiences' love for them was spontaneous; it was not the result of propaganda. Evidence for this is the fact that some of the novels are still in demand even today, when the communist authority they served is in the past. The second feature of interest about the spy novel is the fact that the period when it gained popularity – from the 1960s to the 1980s – coincided with a time when the communist regime gradually entered a stage of crisis, as the enthusiasm for communism began to gradually fade and several models of resistance started to emerge. The spy novel is one of the few spheres where the authorities enjoyed undoubted success.

The project will study the reasons for and the peculiarities of this success. Such a research project is original not only because nothing similar has been conducted as yet, but also because it explores a mode of existence of literature under communism that has escaped notice. Traditionally, this literature is thought of and described as non-self-sufficient, because of its relationship with the authorities who used to classify literary works into two categories: those resistant to, and those supportive of, the aims of the people in power. The success of the spy novel was an event that fell completely outside the control of the authorities. Another paradox was that this phenomenon was not a result of defying authorities (although this also took place over time, together with the spread of dissident behavior), but, in effect, it chimed with and reinforced the dominant ideology.

This project will concentrate on the development of the "spy novel" genre in Bulgaria by drawing parallels with the literatures of other countries of the so-called "Eastern bloc," and most of all with that of the Soviet Union, where the similarities are pronounced. The great cinematographic interest in this genre makes it expedient as well to go beyond literature and take a comparative and interdisciplinary look at a different medium, the cinema.

## International Module

March – July 2015



**Anastasia Karakasidou**

BA (Chemistry, College of Wooster), MA (Archeology, Bryn Mawr College), PhD (Anthropology)  
*Affiliation:* Wellesley College, Department of Anthropology

*Field of study:* **Anthropology**

**Project Title:**  
**Ignoring national borders: Cancer in the Balkans**

My research at the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia is part of my larger, comparative investigation of cancer as a global epidemic threat. It follows my earlier anthropological fieldwork on cancer in China, Greece, Macedonia, Turkey, and the USA, and springs out of the very local voices heard in my original fieldwork on nationalism: all people, of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds, were concerned about the rise in cancer incidence and mortality in their communities. While in residence at CAS, I would like to research and analyze the Bulgarian culture around cancer; compare my results with my previous findings in Greece, Turkey, and Macedonia; and analyze the commonalities and differences in approaching and dealing with cancer in the four Balkan countries. Including Bulgaria in my fieldwork is imperative, as having gone through the socialist era and within the sphere of Soviet influence, Bulgarian medicine and cultural approaches to cancer will shed new light on my research.

Overall, my research and writing on cancer critically examines it as a pervasive disease and a metaphor of global modern cultures. It unravels the ways cancer is perceived as both a somatic and social standard within nationally constructed cognitive frameworks. It investigates both the scientific and emotional responses to the disease and the ways cancer challenges our faith and spirituality, our ways

of life, notions of pollution and cleanliness, and healing strategies. This approach to cancer is comparative and interdisciplinary and focuses on how specialists in different disciplines have described the disease, how its victims in different cultures have narrated their experiences (illness narratives), how causality has been perceived, and what interventions (sacred or secular) have been undertaken as therapy and prevention. Cancer epitomizes the narrative of western biomedical history, which focuses on the march of science and the ideas of the great doctors that led to the conquering of disease. Cancer also epitomizes the anthropological discourse that challenges the ethics of western medical practice and the disparities in the availability of western diagnostic techniques and treatment to all citizens of the globe. My project unravels these "cultures of cancer" by taking into consideration the historical, political, economic and cultural factors that shape our understanding of illness and disease in general, and of cancer in particular.



**Cristian Alexandru Cercel**

BA (International Relations and European Studies, University of Bucharest), MA (Central European University), PhD (International Affairs, Durham University)  
*Affiliations:* Centre for Contemporary German Culture, Swansea University

*Field of study:* **Memory Studies**

**Project Title:**  
**The Memory of the Deportation of Romanian Germans to the Soviet Union on the Local, the National, and the Transnational Levels**

The overall purpose of this project is to explore the politics of memory and memory discourses related to the deportation of ethnic Germans from Romania for forced labour in the Soviet Union, 1945–1949. Through analysing the ways in which this part of European history has been represented and constructed at the local, national, and transnational levels across the temporal divide of 1989, the research will

generate insights into broader questions relating to the role of collective memory, as well as to the interaction between the various forms and levels of remembering.

By exploring the multiple facets of collective memory related to the deportation of Romanian Germans to the USSR, and including studies of both elite and grassroots memory activism, I aim to bring an under-represented aspect of "German victimhood" to the foreground of public and academic discourse. The project shifts the focus from the German expulsions at the end of the Second World War to the lesser-known cases of deportations of Germans from Southeastern Europe. It makes a case for the conceptualization of Romanian German communities as transnational communities, especially against the background of twentieth-century mass migration from Romania, mainly to West Germany, but also to Austria, Canada, the US, France, and Brazil. My research will provide a nuanced treatment of the topic of "German suffering" by critically addressing the political connotations of this term and questioning its instrumentalization. Set within the Romanian and Hungarian contexts, the project will analyze questions of guilt, responsibility, and conflicting representations of the fascist and communist pasts. Thus, my research has the potential to play a significant role in contemporary debates regarding the interpretation of dictatorships in the twentieth century.

So far, the afterlife of the deportations has been under-researched, and the politics of memory associated with the deportation, its use and significance at the local, national, and transnational levels are still to be addressed. Given this gap in the literature and the comparative character of my study, my research hopes to make an original contribution to the field of memory studies in general and to an under-explored field of European history in particular.



### Dimitrios Gkintidis

BA (Balkan, Slavic, and Oriental Studies, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki), MA (Sociology, University of Strasbourg II Marc Bloch), PhD (Social Anthropology, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki)  
*Affiliations:* Independent Scholar

*Field of study:* Political Anthropology  
*Project Title:*

### On moral politics in contemporary Greece

The outbreak of the recent “eurocrisis” in Greece and other Southern European countries actualized the prevalence of morality in public debates and especially among dominant networks – national and European elites. Based on textual material and recently conducted ethnographic fieldwork among Greek technocrats and policy makers, my project aims to highlight the particular moral premises on which the actions and worldview of such dominant networks are based. More specifically, my work takes a historic perspective, since it attempts to retrace the moral construction of the relation between “Greece” and the “European Union” over the last thirty years. I suggest that recurring representations of “PIIGS”, spoiled countries, and spoiled individuals have largely been based on the past form of European Integration in the European South – as largely a moral relation, in reference to the significant amounts of financial aid allocated to Southern countries through the EU budget. This is also the larger framework in which I intend to situate my current research. This research consists of delineating the symbolic construction of European funds among social agents and also their dissemination among local and national audiences. Building on my earlier findings from my doctoral fieldwork in Northeastern Greece, I focus on social agents who hold key positions in the Greek national political field, i.e. empowered technocrats who are public supporters of neoliberal reforms and enact a particular discourse concerning the accountability and obligation of Greeks to reciprocate (and repay) their past prosperity to the EU. In addition, I am

interested in retracing how the construction of the relation between the Greek state and the European Union, through cases of “disinterested” material flows, has had an overall impact on their worldview and their increasingly moral and individualized understanding of global and domestic politics.

The aim of this project does not primarily lie in disproving essentialist arguments or pointing out that EU funding policies were not “free money”. Its actual objective is to stress the centrality of the idea of the gift in modern-day politics and its interrelation with the notion of debt, especially in the current neoliberal context

October 2015 – February 2016



### Yannis Kallianos

BSc (Business Administration, American University of Athens), MRes (Social Anthropology, University of St Andrews), PhD (Social Anthropology, University of St Andrews)  
*Affiliation:* Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change (CRESC), University of Manchester

*Field of Study:* Social Anthropology

*Project Title:*

### Infrastructures, Social Justice and Legitimacy: An Analysis of the Crisis of Political Legitimacy in Greece Based on a Study of Contested Public Infrastructures, 2010–2014

My research will explore notions and transformations of political legitimacy of the state and official institutions based on a study of socio-political arguments around public infrastructures in Greece during the period 2010–2014.

Since the beginning of the economic melt-down, the Greek nation state has officially

entered an era of “crisis”. Since 2010 a series of austerity measures have been imposed by the European Union, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, which have led to the rapid rise of unemployment, homelessness, and suicide, as well as to the establishment of precarious employment, health, and work conditions. These austerity measures have been complemented by a strict regulatory system of economic and political regulation and surveillance. From this point on, this crisis has been inextricably connected with the gradual decline of the political legitimacy of institutional authority, the rise of a multiform network of grassroots political initiatives challenging the capitalistic mainstream economic and political model, as well as such neoliberal processes as the political project to reengineer the state.

The main objective of my research will be to explore the social-cultural and socio-technical modalities of political legitimacy in relation to ideas of social justice and the politics of infrastructures – dynamic systems that can define everyday experiences, and thus reframe the socio-cultural processes that constitute legitimation. Infrastructures make possible the circulation of goods, knowledge, meaning, people, and power, and as a result, they make new collectivities, shape modern society and bring about the future.

My research attempts to shed light on the relation between political legitimacy and infrastructures within the framework of crisis in the Greek context. It attempts to reconsider the fundamental constitutive elements that confer (political) legitimacy, which for Weber “entails that a social order is accepted as valid either due to its historicity, to its emotional value or to instrumental reasoning”. Secondly, infrastructures work as an ethnographic and material constant through which the abstractions of legitimacy can be examined in their specifics, and thus later reconsidered based on the macro socio-political situation. Finally, my research will challenge the relationship between political legitimacy and political authority by asking how political legitimacy is codified and mobilized away from state institutions. In this regard, my research will try to engage with an important issue of our time that reemerged in the context of the current crisis, and to explore how notions of legitimacy are framed within (urban) informal socio-political networks.



### Jonathan Wright

MA (History, St Andrews University), D. Phil (Tudor History, Oxford University)  
*Affiliation:* Department of Theology and Religion, Durham University

*Field of Study:* Religious History

*Project Title:*

### Religious Exile and its Cultural Consequences in Reformation and Post-Reformation Europe

One of the dilemmas confronting people living through the turmoil of the Reformation was how to respond to religious persecution and rivalry. Recent scholarship has done a huge amount to reveal the rich variety of responses. One group within this complex religious landscape has only begun to secure its rightful place at the heart of our studies, however. I speak of religious exiles.

There was heated debate during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries about how the individual who chose to flee religious persecution should be perceived. Was exile understood as a brave or a cowardly choice? Where did it lie on the spectrum of responses to religious persecution? In a former article, I approached this topic from a solidly theological perspective and in a specific historical context. I believe we need to look at this debate in more detail, in a broader geographical context, and with an eye to exploring how a seemingly narrow theological topic impacted broader cultural debates about the phenomenon of exile in its non-religious variants.

My proposed interdisciplinary research begins with an examination of the competing interpretations of religious exile. The questions to be addressed are: Under what circumstances was exile legitimate? Did persecution have to be in full swing or was the potential for loss of life, limb or property sufficient? Which groups could legitimately pursue the course of exile? Did social status have a bearing? Did

the success of exile indicate legitimacy? Was there a difference between self-imposed exile and being forced to leave by a hostile regime? How was compulsion to be defined? The importance of this task bears comparison with the rich literature on the conceptualisation of martyrdom during the Reformation.

I intend to look at these debates at both the level of theory and of praxis. I will make a close study of writers who tackled the topic of exile at great length, but one of the secondary goals of my research will be to establish an annotated working list of texts (across the main European languages and from both Catholic and Protestant sides of the aisle) that explored the subject of religious exile.

The other main plank of my research is to explore a number of case studies that expose the many arguments and problems religious exile opened up. Here I aim for wide geographical and topical scope. I will also examine how the process of exile was codified and approached at the institutional level, as this topic has received little attention so far.

One of the ultimate goals of my research will be a monograph on religious exile in Reformation and post-Reformation Europe.



### Raluca-Elena Goleşteanu

BA (Journalism and Communication Sciences; Political Sciences, University of Bucharest), MA (History, Central European University), PhD (History, Polish Academy of Sciences)  
*Affiliation:* Polish Academy of Sciences

*Field of study:* Modern European Social and Intellectual History with a focus on Comparative History of Central and Eastern Europe in the Nineteenth Century

*Project Title:*

### Imagining the Periphery: the Small Jewish Town in the Eyes of Max Blecher (Romania) and Bruno Schulz (Poland)

A significant number of books have researched the *shtetls* (Yiddish – little towns with a large number of Jewish population in Central and Eastern Europe before WWII – Ed.) and the larger towns of Moldavia, Bukovina, or Galicia as images of the periphery before the Holocaust. Similarly, recent scholarship has shown an impressive interest in the work and life of Max Blecher (1909 – 1938) and Bruno Schulz (1892–1942), as their style of writing is considered representative of an existentialist worldview in which the individual is in contest with the absurd (and hence alienating) environment of the modern world. Today, their work is reconsidered in relation to their Jewish identity, the intricate political context they lived in, and regarded as part of the wider contribution that Jews of Eastern and Central Europe made to contemporary culture.

In addition, Blecher’s and Schulz’s names are loaded with political meaning: Blecher published all of his major books and articles in the years witnessing the gradual lapse of Romanian society into totalitarianism, whereas Schulz tragically fell victim to the Nazi repressions in Drohobycz, Galicia – a settlement with a significant Jewish population, and a scene of opposing Polish and Ukrainian national interests in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Thus Schulz has also been regarded as a symbol of the intricate and uncertain ethnic relations in Eastern Galicia, which were visible even long after his death.

The proposed research will analyze Schulz’s and Blecher’s intellectual output from the perspective of a Jewish identity and try to insert them in an wider context related to the “kindred fate” of other Jewish intellectuals in the region. My next objective is to explore Blecher and Schulz as avant-garde writers with a subjective, emotional, spiritual relation to their environment strikingly reminiscent of the “vanished world” of Jewish Galicia and Moldavia recreated in modern-day blogs, exhibitions, and albums. Thus Blecher and Schulz can be regarded as instances of *avant la lettre* re-construction of the world of the small Jewish towns of Eastern and Central Europe that contribute to the preservation of the symbols of their communities.



**17 March 2015**

**Advanced Academia Public Lecture**

Assoc. Prof. Snezhanka Rakova, *Between the Sultan and the Doge: Diplomats and Spies at the Time of Suleiman the Magnificent*

**20 March 2015**

**CAS Discussion Series:**

*Existential Socialism: Ageing under Socialism*

**Book Launch:**

*Love under Socialism* (CAS/Riva Publishers, 2015)

**23 March 2015**

**Advanced Academia Public Lecture**

Prof. Evelina Kelbecheva, *The Divided Historical Memories in Bulgaria*

**April 2015**

**01 April 2015**

**Advanced Academia Public Lecture**

Dr Mariya Ivancheva, *From Informal to Illegal: Transforming Roma Housing in Socialist Bulgaria*

**07 April 2015**

**Advanced Academia Public Lecture**

Assoc. Prof. Boyko Penchev, *Liberal Skills, Conservative Values: Canon and Literary Education in Bulgaria after 1989*

**14 April 2015**

**Advanced Academia Public Lecture**

Dr Kamelia Spassova, *Mimesis: Doppelganger as a Political Figure*

**21 April 2015**

**Advanced Academia Public Lecture**

Dr Atanas Slavov, *Between Endorsement and Ambivalence: Democracy and Eastern Orthodoxy in Post-Communist South East Europe*

**23 April 2015**

**Fellow Seminar**

Dr Anastasia Karakasidou, *Ignoring National Borders: Cancer in the Balkans*

**28 April 2015**

**Advanced Academia Public Lecture**

Dr Grigor Boykov, *Changes, Processes and People: Historical Demography of Bulgaria (Fifteenth–Seventeenth Centuries)*



**May 2015**

**8 May 2015**

**CAS Discussion Series:**

*Existential Socialism: Ageing under Socialism*

**13 May 2015**

**Book Launch**

*Natural Sciences, Technologies and Social Worlds* (CAS/Riva Publishers, 2015)  
Venue: CAS Conference Hall

**14 May 2015**

**Fellow Seminar**

Dr Cristian Cercel, *The Memory of the Deportation of Romanian Germans to the Soviet Union on the Local, the National, and the Transnational Levels*

**June 2015**

**04 June 2015**

**Fellow Seminar**

Dr Dimitrios Gkintidis, *On Moral Politics in Contemporary Greece*

**11 June 2015**

**Fellow Seminar**

Dr Dimitrina Popova, *Vernacular Urban Design Networks in the Post-Socialist Public Spaces between the Prefabricated Concrete Apartment Buildings of Sofia*

**25 June 2015**

**Fellow Seminar**

Dr Elka Dimitrova-Willis, *The Marginal Intellectual*

**July 2015**

**02 July 2015**

**Fellow Seminar**

Dr Konstantin Golev, *Witch-hunt in the Court of the Great Khan (Magic, Superstition, and their Political Usage in the Mongol Empire during the Thirteenth Century)*



**October 2014**

**03 October 2014**

Opening of the New Academic Year 2014 –2015

**30 October 2014**

**Fellow Seminar**

Prof. Evelina Kelbecheva, *The Dividing Time of Historical Memories in Bulgaria*

**November 2014**

**04 November 2014**

Kultura Website Awards: Second Prize in the Humanities Category for CAS Fellow, Prof. Ivan Elenkov, *Labour, Joy, Recreation and Culture* (CAS/Riva Publishers, 2013)

**13 November 2014**

**Fellow Seminar**

Dr Snezhanka Rakova, *Between the Sultan and the Doge: Diplomats and Spies at the Time of Suleiman the Magnificent*

**27 November 2014**

**Fellow Seminar**

Dr Rory Yeomans, *The Moral Economy of Genocide: Race, Mobility and Rebirth in Greater Croatia, 1931–1945*



**December 2014**

**04 December 2014**

**Fellow Seminar**

Dr Stefania Costache, *To Subordinate or to Assist? French Experts and Early Approaches to International Investment in the Ottoman Empire (1856–1867)*

**January 2015**

**15 January 2015**

**Fellow Seminar**

Dr Kamelia Spassova, *J.P. Vernant on Plato's Mimetic Theory: Images, Doubles and Simulacra*

**29 January 2015**

**Fellow Seminar**

Dr Gregory Myers, *Musical Performance Practice in Slavica Orthodoxa, (Eleventh – Fourteenth Centuries)*

**February 2015**

**05 February 2015**

**Fellow Seminar**

Dr Mihai Olaru, *Writing Like a State. Recordkeeping and State Power in Wallachia, 1691 –1821*

**19 February 2015**

**Fellow Seminar**

Dr Teodora Karamelska, *Mind, Body, and Spirit: Women's Religiosity between Spirituality and Holistic Practices*

**25 February 2015**

**CAS Fellow Workshop**

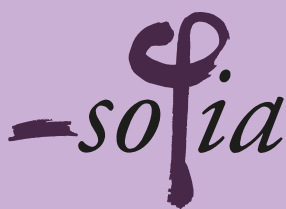
Dr Mihai Olaru, Dr Grigor Boykov and Dr Rory Yeomans, *Encounters with the "State"*

**March 2015**

**10 March 2015**

**Advanced Academia Public Lecture**

Dr Teodora Karamelska, *Mind, Body, and Spirit: Women's Religiosity between Spirituality and Holistic Practices*



## Research Forum **series**

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